

WE CLAIM:

- 1 1. A method of offering items for sale in a group, comprising:
 - 2 (1) defining an affinity space coordinate for each of plural items available
 - 3 for sale;
 - 4 (2) creating a package template including at least one mandatory element
 - 5 schema having an associated affinity space description;
 - 6 (3) comparing, with a computer, the affinity space coordinate for each of the
 - 7 plural items with the affinity space description associated with the package
 - 8 template; and
 - 9 (4) if the comparison step reveals a match, presenting for sale a package that
 - 10 is defined at least in part by the package template and includes at least one item
 - 11 with a matching affinity space description.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the presenting step is performed by
- 2 dynamically generating an html page containing a description of the package, and
- 3 transmitting the html page over a decentralized computer network to at least one
- 4 consumer.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 further including eliciting at least one constraint
- 2 from a consumer, and selecting or rejecting the package template based at least in
- 3 part on the elicited consumer constraint.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes customer
- 2 mood.
- 1 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes number of
- 2 persons travelling.
- 1 6. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing
- 2 constraint.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further including storing a description of each of
2 the plural items, including said associated affinity space coordinates in a computer
3 database, and wherein the comparing step includes searching the computer
4 database for items having affinity coordinates matching the affinity space
5 description associated with the package template.

1 8. The method of claim 1 further including maintaining a hash table of the
2 items keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparing step includes
3 performing a hash table lookup for each required affinity space description.

1 9. The method of claim 1 further including permitting a consumer to
2 purchase the package by transmitting at least one message over a digital
3 communications network.

1 10. The method of claim 9 further including confirming the consumer's
2 purchase of the package by transmitting a further message of the digital
3 communications network.

1 11. A computer system for offering items for sale in a group, comprising:
2 a data arrangement that stores at least a description of each of plural items
3 available for sale, said description including an affinity space coordinate, the data
4 arrangement also storing at least one package template including at least one
5 mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space description;
6 a comparator coupled to the data arrangement, the comparator comparing the
7 affinity space coordinate for each of the plural items with the affinity space
8 description associated with the package template; and
9 a user interface arrangement coupled to the comparator, the user interface
10 presenting for sale a package that is defined at least in part by the package template
11 and includes at least one item with a matching affinity space description.

1 *put in* 12. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface arrangement includes a
2 page generator that dynamically generating an html page containing a description
3 of the package, and transmits the html page over a decentralized computer network
4 to at least one consumer web browsing appliance.

1 13. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface arrangement also
2 elicits at least one constraint from a consumer, and selects or rejects the package
3 template based at least in part on the elicited consumer constraint.

1 14. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes
2 customer mood.

1 15. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes number
2 of persons travelling.

1 16. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing
2 constraint.

1 *put in* 17. The system of claim 1 wherein the comparator includes a database
2 engine that searches the computer database for items having affinity coordinates
3 matching the affinity space description associated with the package template.

1 18. The system of claim 1 further including a hash table of the plural items
2 keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparator performs a hash
3 table lookup for each required affinity space description.

1 19. The system of claim 1 further including a purchase transactor that
2 permits a consumer to purchase the package by transmitting at least one message
3 over a digital communications network.

1 20. The system of claim 19 further including a confirmation section that
2 confirms the consumer's purchase of the package by transmitting a further message
3 of the digital communications network.

1 21. A method of offering travel arrangements over a decentralized computer
2 network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, the method comprising:

- 3 (a) storing descriptions of available travel components in a database;
4 (b) storing at least one travel package template;
5 (c) eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer;
6 (d) dynamically generating at least one travel package based on the elicited
7 consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and at least one stored
8 available travel component description; and
9 (e) offering the generated travel package to the consumer by transmitting a
10 description of the generated travel package over the decentralized computer
11 network to the consumer's web browsing appliance.

1 22. The method of claim 21 further including receiving a consumer
2 purchase request over the network, and performing a purchasing transaction to
3 purchase the at least one stored available travel component.

1 23. The method of claim 21 further including using a screen-scraping
2 technique to obtain said available travel component descriptions.

1 24. The method of claim 21 wherein the travel component description
2 includes an affinity space coordinate.

1 25. The method of claim 21 wherein the travel package template includes at
2 least one mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space
3 description.

1 26. The method of claim 21 wherein the generating step includes
2 comparing, with a computer, a affinity space coordinate for each of the travel
3 components with a affinity space description associated with the package
4 template.

1 27. The method of claim 21 wherein the available travel components each
2 expire within a short time period.

1 28. A computer system for offering travel arrangements over a decentralized
2 computer network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, comprising:
3 a data storage arrangement that stores descriptions of available travel
4 components and at least one travel package template;
5 a user interface element coupled to the network, the user interface element
6 eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer; and
7 an package engine that dynamically generates at least one travel package
8 based on the elicited consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and
9 at least one stored available travel component description, and offers the generated
10 travel package to the consumer by transmitting a description of the generated travel
11 package over the decentralized computer network to the consumer's web browsing
12 appliance.

1 29. A method of dynamically creating packages comprising:
2 (a) receiving a request based on a link from a web site;
3 (b) ascertaining at least one customer constraint;
4 (c) dynamically generating at least one package based on the elicited
5 consumer constraint, at least one package template, and at least one stored
6 available component description, and
7 (d) offering the generated package to the consumer by transmitting a
8 description of the generated package over a decentralized computer network.

1 30. The method of claim 29 wherein the component comprises a last-minute
2 travel component, and the web site offers at least travel related services.

1 31. The method of claim 29 wherein the dynamically generating step is
2 performed by the web site.